

# **INFORMATION FOR THE PRESS**

## **United States Department of Agriculture**

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### **TO STUDY NUTRITION NEEDS OF BOBWHITE**

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What makes a good bobwhite quail diet, and why, is the subject of a cooperative study now getting under way in the U. S. Department of Agriculture as part of the work with funds provided by the Bankhead-Jones Research Appropriation. Results of the study are expected to be helpful to quail propagators and also to those who wish to improve natural food areas for bobwhite in the wild.

Bobwhite quail will be propagated and fed experimentally at the Biological Survey's Patuxent Research Refuge, east of Laurel, Md. Laboratory studies will be made at the nearby Beltsville Research Center, in the Poultry Nutrition Laboratory of the Bureau of Animal Industry.

Directed by the Biological Survey's specialists in food habits research, the study will be carried on by a nutrition expert and an experienced game propagator. Associate Biologist Ralph B. Nestler, former nutrition expert in the Poultry Section of the Bureau of Animal Industry's Animal Nutrition Division, will make the laboratory investigations and conduct the project. Junior Biologist W. W. Bailey, formerly assistant superintendent of game propagation for the Virginia Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries, will propagate the birds and make practical tests of experimental results. Mr. Nestler joined the Biological Survey on December 1, and Mr. Bailey on January 3.

Propagation of game birds has increased steadily during the past 20 years, says the Biological Survey, and at present large numbers of bobwhite quail are

being produced in captivity to supply the demands of private and public agencies engaged in restocking depleted game areas. As a basis for scientific feeding of these birds in captivity, the new study will work out the nutritional requirements of the species, and the chemical composition of important foods. The results will also be helpful in improving quail food resources on areas where the species is to be encouraged.

Feeding experiments will be conducted to ascertain requirements for maintenance of normal body functions, such as growth, reproduction, and result. Other experiments will test the reaction that various combinations of quail foods have on the birds.

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